

*Washington, D.C. (September 12, 2012) – Today, Rep. Jan Schakowsky released the following statement after voting against the FISA Amendments Act Reauthorization Act of 2012 (FAA), legislation to reauthorize authority for electronic surveillance of foreigners outside the United States :*

“As a member of the Intelligence Committee, I take the threat of terrorism very seriously. I believe we are fully capable of protecting our security and safeguarding our precious civil liberties. This legislation is a long-term extension of a controversial law, and it fails to take necessary steps to increase transparency.

The law authorizes the government to collect mass electronic communications coming into and going out of the United States so long as no American citizen in the United States is intentionally targeted. Yet in April 2009, the New York Times reported that the National Security Agency ‘intercepted private email messages and phone calls of Americans... on a scale that went beyond the broad legal limits established by Congress.’ This legislation would extend this violation of privacy of American citizens through 2017.

I cosponsored an amendment offered by my colleague Mr. Nadler to require the publication of unclassified summaries of decisions by the FISA court. I also cosponsored an amendment by Mr. Conyers, to shorten the extension of this law. Yet floor debate was not allowed on either of those provisions.

This legislation could negatively affect American constitutionally-protected rights to privacy, free association, and free speech. Congress has the responsibility to at least add a basic measure of transparency to the process.”

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